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A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR CREATIVITY.

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IN AN ATTEMPT TO STIMULATE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION AMONG TEACHERS, A SIX-COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN NEW PHILADELPHIA, OHIO, SERVING MORE THAN 50,000 STUDENTS AND 2,500 TEACHERS. WITH A PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF 8, AND EQUIPPED WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF AUDIOVISUAL DEVICES, THE CENTER IS PREPARED TO ASSIST ANY TEACHER WITHIN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING. A WIDE SELECTION OF MOTION PICTURE TITLES IS MAINTAINED IN ADDITION TO A COMPLETE DATA PROCESSING FACILITY TO WHICH ANY TEACHER MAY SUBSCRIBE. A NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED AT THE CENTER CONCERNING THE USE OF AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TITLE II CULTURAL ENRICHMENT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1966, MORE THAN 300 PROJECTS HAVE BEEN INITIATED IN THE SIX-COUNTY AREA SERVED. THIS ARTICLE APPEARS IN THE "OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION JOURNAL," VOL. 12, NO. 2, FEBRUARY 1968. (DA)

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A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR CREATIVITY

Educational Service Centers or area education centers have been the subject of much discussion over the past few years. The Master Plan for School District Organization had as one of its primary recommendations the establishment of a network of centers. Legislators have studied bills to create such centers and still have one under consideration. The annual joint Conference of the OSBA and other state groups devoted a discussion session to the topic last fall.

In New Philadelphia, Ohio, an educational resource center is already in full operation. Funded by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Tuscarawas Valley 6-I-77 Educational Service Center is serving over 50,000 students and approximately 2,500 educators in six counties--Carroll, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, and Tuscarawas.

Public, private and parochial schools with the help of the center are encouraged to work together towards educational improvement through the use of curriculum innovations. "Improving Education Through the Better Use of Research and Resource" is the center's motto.

The center's basic concept is that to develop better teaching methods, the teacher must create an environment that will encourage student initiative and stimulate individual and group participation. He must have the vision and courage to try new techniques, knowing

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that creativity has its failures as well as its successes. Teachers in the center's participating districts are able to try new techniques because the center makes this possible.

The heart and soul of the center is the use of its two-man research staff, its four curriculum coordinators, and one library coordinator in its strategy for change. Its aim is to stimulate thinking among board members and administrators to induce their teachers to be more creative and innovative. The center is, basically, a seeding operation and hopes to set up exemplary situations for educators to observe. The center has available for use as back-up material 16mm sound projectors, filmstrip projectors, carrousel slide projectors, tape recorders, 8mm movie carmeras, 8mm single concept projectors, tripod wall screens, 23 and 27-inch black and white and color television receivers, AM and FM radios, eight headset listening centers, reading machines, filmstrip viewers, 8mm movie projectors and record players. These materials are also used for inservice training.

TEACHING PROJECTS

An innovation, while successful with one group, may not fulfill the needs of another group. Each individual student or group has its own basic needs. At the center, teachers are encouraged to try the untried, or as referred to by the center--Projects.

It is important to note that projects are also initiated by teachers who are using already established, proven methods. These projects entail enlarging upon these methods with the support of research and resources which the center offers.

Typically, a teacher will request center services through his principal. A conference is arranged between principal, teacher and

a center coordinator. It is well understood that requests for assistance are not made because of a lack of knowledge on the part of the instructor, but for suggestions on the methods to be used and how these are to be supported by modern research and resources.

The eight-member professional staff may be used by the teacher to aid in designing of projects, as a source of information on previous research in the area, and to aid in the evaluation of a particular teaching method.

Since December, 1966, more than 300 projects have been initiated by classroom teachers in the area. When a project is finished, the center aids in disseminating the findings to other teachers. The project teacher along with her students in invited to demonstrate the newly developed technique in our telemated classroom. Teachers from the six-county area are invited to attend.

The first demonstration took place in March, 1967, when a first-grade teacher from Mineral City Elementary School and her students demonstrated a project entitled, "Creative Activities Related to Teaching Reading in the First Grade." The center's primary coordinator worked closely with this elementary teacher and her principal throughout the project.

From observations of other teachers' projects, we hope that teachers who have feared curriculum innovations will seize the opportunity to employ the services of the center.

THE FILM LIBRARY

The center's film library consists of 830 titles in subject areas from kindergarten through high school. Films are loaned on both project and non-project requests. However, we ask nonproject teachers to specify subject area, unit of study, advance preparation and follow-up of a film so that we may encourage proper

utilization of materials. To provide expedient use of materials, two driver-technicians visit each school once weekly to deliver requested materials and to pick up materials already used.

The center is equipped with a three-slave, two-console duplicating system which permits nine 1200-inch tapes to be copied in one hour. Schools are free to utilize our services in duplicating as many tapes as they wish from a record or tape, as long as they furnish the blank tape.

A full-time librarian lends support to the coordination of school projects and is also used as a resource person and consultant to other school librarians. A model demonstration library makes a beginning book collection available in an exemplary setting.

DATA PROCESSING CENTER

One of the outstanding features of the center is its data processing service, probably the only one of its kind in the U.S. serving a basically rural area. A 9200 UNIVAC and three key punch machines are now operational with the following services available as of February, 1968: payroll and high school class scheduling, grade reporting and test scoring. The center hopes to have a data phone by June of 1968.

WORKSHOPS

A number of varied workshops have been conducted by the center. While the most important purpose of these workshops has been to assist the teacher in better use of audio-visual teaching and learning resource materials, they have also featured content on Title II development programs, cultural enrichment, programmed instruction and physical education.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTER

The idea of a central distribution point for audio-visual materials and for the pooling of educational innovations was supported by many

educators in the six-county area. County superintendents and other administrators met in a series of conferences to give center planners suggestions.

The name of the center was derived from its geographical location and the fact that the six counties are bisected by Interstate Route 77--Tuscarawas Valley 6-1-77 Educational Service Center.

Nineteen people are employed. These include a full-time director, two research specialists, four coordinating consultants, one library consultant, a data processing specialist, one programmer, plus secretarial and clerical staff and driver-technicians.

We are fully cognizant that our organization is still in its infancy. However, educators are painfully aware of a need to improve educational methods. An educational renaissance seems to be taking place across the country today and we hope that our newly established center will play a part in this development. We feel it would be well worth the time of all administrators, board members, and lay people to visit 6-1-77 to observe an innovation in education.